MARVEL

42

STAR WARS

DARTH VADER

PAK
GORHAM
BLEE

RISE OF THE SCHISM IMPERIAL!

RISE OF THE SCHISM IMPERIAL

After facing a series of tests by Emperor Palpatine and Grand Vizier Mas Amedda during the scourge of the droids, Darth Vader eventually used the corrupted droids to his advantage, taking out the onslaughts of troopers sent after him.

Now a new threat to the Empire is rising from within, and they've got their eyes on Vader....

GREG PAK
Writer

ADAM GORHAM
Artist

FEDERICO BLEE
Colorist

VC's JOE CARAMAGNA
Letterer

LEINIL FRANCIS YU & ROMULO FAJARDO JR.
Cover Artists

ALAN QUAH; CASPAR WIJNGAARD (*Rebels* 10th Anniversary)
Variant Cover Artists

MIKEY J. BASSO
Assistant Editor

DANNY KHAZEM
Associate Editor

MARK PANICCIA
Editor

C.B. CEBULSKI
Editor in Chief

For Lucasfilm:
Senior Editor ROBERT SIMPSON
Associate Editor GRACE ORRISS
Creative Director MICHAEL SIGLAIN
Art Director TROY ALDERS
Lucasfilm Story Group MATT MARTIN, PABLO HIDALGO & EMILY SHKOUKANI
Creative Art Manager PHIL SZOSTAK

Imperial Palace.
Coruscant.

UGH.

GRAND VIZIER?

AH! SUB-ADMINISTRATOR MOORE!

YOU LOOK *PALE*. ARE YOU *UNWELL?*

DON'T BE RIDICULOUS!

OH, MY APOLOGIES.

YOUR EMINENCE!

I BEG YOUR PARDON FOR THE INTERRUPTION...

...BUT I BELIEVE *MAS AMEDDA* HAS SOME KIND OF *REPORT* FOR YOU.

I'LL TELL THE EMPEROR THAT YOU ARE HERE, THEN.

AH! NO NEED! I'LL--

AH YES...

...I SENSED HIS *FEAR* FROM A KILOMETER AWAY.

WHAT NEW *FAILURE* HAVE YOU TO REPORT, GRAND VIZIER?

I...I CAN TELL YOU THE *DROID THREAT* HAS BEEN *DESTROYED...**

BUT...?

*IN DARK DROIDS #5.

...BUT WE HAVE REPORTS THAT *LORD VADER* WAS TEMPORARILY ABLE TO *INFECT* AND CONTROL DROIDS OF HIS *OWN*.

WE BELIEVE HE'S *LOST* THOSE ABILITIES. BUT HE SEEKS MORE *POWER* EVERY DAY--

REALLY? YOU MEAN...

SKKTT

BKKKKZZZZZZZZZT

GAAAH!

...LORD VADER, WHO WAS SO *WEAK* WHEN I SENT YOU AFTER HIM, GROWS EVEN *STRONGER?*

Y-YES, YOUR EMINENCE.

YOU'RE *ENJOYING* THIS, AREN'T YOU, SUB-ADMINISTRATOR MOORE?

YES, YOUR EMINENCE.

DO YOU THINK *YOU* COULD DO BETTER IN THIS MATTER THAN THE VIZIER?

YES, YOUR EMINENCE.

Zee-Nine City Seven.

DROID, START A NEW RECORDING.

YES, SIR. READY WHEN YOU ARE.

TO GRAND VIZIER *MAS AMEDDA*...

...FROM LIEUTENANT *ENRIC PRYDE* OF *STEADFAST*, TEMPORARILY BILLETED TO STAR DESTROYER *IMPERVIOUS* ON INSPECTION DUTY TO *ZEE-NINE*.

DESPITE THE USE OF THIS *REPAIR CENTER* BY *KNOWN PIRATE GROUPS* SUCH AS THE *DROID CRUSH* OF BESTOON...

...THE *IMPERIAL GARRISON* HERE REMAINS WOEFULLY *UNDERSTAFFED* AND *UNDERFUNDED*...

...AND THUS A PRIME TARGET FOR *REBELS*.

SINCE MY LAST REPORT, I HAVE DISCOVERED *THREE MORE SECURITY BREACHES* AND CAPTURED A DOZEN MORE *INSURGENTS*.

ONCE AGAIN, I URGENTLY REQUEST DEPLOYMENT OF THE *TROOPS* AND *SUPPLIES* OUTLINED IN MY--

FRAKOOM FRAKOOOM

GAH!

FRAKOOOM

FRAKOOM FRAKOOOM FRAKOOOM

CONTACT THE *IMPERVIOUS*!

TELL THEM WE'RE *UNDER ATTACK*!

I AM ATTEMPTING TO CONNECT, SIR...

...BUT I DON'T BELIEVE THEY'LL BE ANSWERING.

NO...

YAAAAAAAAA!

ERUPTION

NOOOO!

DON'T JUST *STAND* THERE *GAWPING!*

FORM A *PERIMETER!*

THE REBELS WILL BE COMING FOR US!

AND WE APPARENTLY CAN'T EXPECT ANY *SUPPORT* FROM OUR *SUPERIORS.*

SO *GET READY!*

BECAUSE WE'RE *ON OUR OWN!*

THAT'S *RIGHT,* PRYDE! YOUR STINKING *EMPIRE* HAS ABANDONED *YOU!*

AND NOW YOU'RE GONNA *DIE!*

YOU KNOW, WE WERE ONLY KEEPING YOU *ALIVE* IN CASE YOU HAD INFORMATION ABOUT THE *REBEL ATTACK PLANS.*

I GUESS THERE'S NO NEED FOR THAT ANY LONGER.

STOP RIGHT THERE, IMPERIAL SCUM!

STEP AWAY FROM THOSE PRISONERS AND DROP YOUR WEAPONS!

OR YOU'RE ALL DEAD!

HM.

YOU DROP YOUR WEAPONS, OR THESE ***PRISONERS*** ARE DEAD!

...

FINE.

SKLAAANG

HA! YOU ***REBELS***. SO ***NOBLE!***

FIRE!

BRRZAAM BRZZAAAM BRRRZZZZAAAM

IT'S NOT SO MUCH THAT WE'RE NOBLE...

...IT'S JUST A LOT MORE *FUN* THIS WAY.

I MEAN, IF YOU'RE *MACHINE-AUGMENTED REBELS*, YOU WANNA USE THOSE *AUGMENTATIONS*, DON'TCHA?

GRRAAA!

HA HA HA!

MAKE WAY FOR THE **M.A.R. CORPS!**

Twelve hours later.

LIEUTENANT PRYDE?

WH- WHO--?

LORD VADER!

IT'S-- IT'S A TRAP!

WELL, OF COURSE IT IS. NOW, HOW MANY ARE THERE?

AT LEAST A *HUNDRED* REBEL FOOT SOLDIERS.

NO, HOW MANY CYBORGS?

FOUR.

ARE THEY... FORMIDABLE?

I'VE... I'VE NEVER SEEN MORE DEADLY SOLDIERS.

GOOD.

ZZZZZZ

SKLAAAANG

GAH!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE, LIEUTENANT PRYDE.

I RECOMMEND YOU EVACUATE WHILE YOU CAN.

WAIT...LORD VADER!

I'M SERIOUS!

IT'S A TRAP!

YES, IT IS.

BRZZAM
BRZZAAM
GAH!
SKAZZAAN
UKK!
BRZZAAAANG
SKLAAANG
BRRZZAAM
KTOOOM
BRAAKOOW
SKTAAAANG
SKR
ROOW
LORD VADER!

THIS WAY, MY LORD!

DO NOT INTERFERE...

GAH!

...WITH WHAT YOU FAIL TO COMPREHEND.

EEE!

WHA--?

CLICK

ZOOF

SKTTTTTKT

GAH!

ZZZZ
HNNH!
ZZZTT
AAAH!
DDZZZT
GRRAAAA!
M.A.R. CORPS, WHAT'S GOING ON DOWN THERE?
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
WE'RE PERFECTLY *FINE*, COMMANDER...
...JUST UNDER NEW *MANAGEMENT*.
THE *PROCESSORS* HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFULLY *IMPLANTED*, LORD VADER.
THESE UNITS ARE NOW CONTROLLED BY *IMPERIAL DROID BRAINS*.
YOU HAVE YOUR ORDERS.
BY YOUR COMMAND.
SONOFA...

BRZZAM

THEY'VE TURNED!

BRRRZAAAM

BRRZAAAM

OPEN FIRE--

UKK!

BRRZZAAM

BRRZZAAM

IS THIS YOUR BEST?

JUST A MOMENT, LORD VADER...

...I'M ACCESSING THIS UNIT'S *MEMORY BANKS.*

IT'S STILL *RESISTING* A BIT.

AH. *THERE* IT IS.

THESE ARE THE PRIMARY *ORDNANCE CACHES* OF THE REBELS CURRENTLY ATTACKING US.

ALL WE NEED TO *DO* IS--

SKRRAAKOOW

GAH!

TANDORVO! CHAMDAKA! BLADES!

THEY--THEY *IMPLANTED* US WITH SOMETHING!

TANDORVO! WAIT! YOU'VE GOT TO FIGHT IT!

CLIK

THE ORDNANCE--!

KRAKOOOOOM

NOOOO!

FTOOOOM

UKK!

L-LORD VADER, WAIT...

...IF...IF I COULD BE OF SERVICE...

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST, LIEUTENANT...

Mustafar.

"...BUT YOU ARE ENTIRELY UNEQUIPPED FOR WHAT COMES NEXT."

NOW THIS IS COMING ALONG NICELY, ISN'T IT?

VZZZT

DDZZZT

HNN...

AAAGH!

BZZZTT

GRAAAAAA!

HNN!

EH?

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, LORD VADER?

I CAN FEEL THEM...

...FIGHTING IT.

AH YES. IDEALLY, WE'D JUST **ELIMINATE** THEIR ORGANIC BRAINS.

BUT THEIR VALUE AS **SOLDIERS** DEPENDS ON THE **TRAINING** AND **SKILLS** EMBEDDED IN THEIR **NERVOUS SYSTEMS.**

BUT WITH THEIR **FULL ARMOR** IN PLACE, THE IMPLANTED **DROID BRAINS** SHOULD NOT LOSE CONTROL AGAIN.

IF THE AGONY OF THEIR **ORGANIC PARTS** IS TOO TROUBLING, WE COULD EXPERIMENT WITH SOME KIND OF **ANALGESIC--**

SILENCE, DROID.

WE HAVE...

...A VISITOR.

SUB-ADMINISTRATOR MOORE.

ADMINISTRATOR MOORE.

AH. THE EMPEROR FAVORS YOU ONCE MORE.

LORD VADER HUMILIATED THE *GRAND VIZIER*. NOW IT IS *MY* TIME TO SHINE.

THE EMPEROR SENT ME TO *ASSIST* YOU.

TO *SPY* ON ME.

OF COURSE.

WE WERE TOLD YOU WERE *BUILDING* YOUR *STRENGTH*.

BUT YOU SEEM...

...*TROUBLED*.

ARE YOU NOT *HAPPY* WITH YOUR *PROGRESS?*

THIS...

...*GAME*...

...WILL NOT GO *WELL* FOR YOU, ADMINISTRATOR.

OH, I'M TOO *SMALL* FOR *GAMES*, LORD VADER.

THE ONLY WAY THROUGH ALL OF THIS FOR ME IS THE *TRUTH*.

YOU MUST *DESTROY* YOUR *MASTER* OR *BE DESTROYED*, YES?

THAT IS THE WAY OF THE *SITH.*

BUT AS *POWERFUL* AS YOU ARE, YOU ARE NOT *READY.*

WE CAN *MAKE* YOU READY.

"WE"?

WE...

...ARE THE *SCHISM.*

IMPERIALS WHO HAVE HAD ENOUGH OF THE EMPEROR'S *CAPRICE* AND *FAILURE.*

I BELIEVE YOU ALREADY KNOW *GOVERNOR TAUNTAZA* AND *CAPTAIN CORLEQUE?*

ALL I SEE HERE...

...IS *WEAKNESS.*

AND WEAKNESS MUST BE *DESTROYED.*

YOU ARE INDEED A ***SITH***. OBSESSED WITH ***PERSONAL*** POWER ABOVE ALL ELSE.

THAT'S HOW ***CRIMSON DAWN*** GOT CLOSER THAN THEY EVER SHOULD HAVE.

THAT'S HOW I'M WHERE I AM RIGHT NOW, CHANGING ***EVERYTHING*** EVEN AS WE SPEAK.

YOU THINK WE'RE JUST A FEW ***COGS*** IN THE ***MACHINE***.

AND YOU'RE NOT ***WRONG***.

I COULD SHOW YOU MORE OF OUR MEMBERS. BUT THERE'S NO ONE OF NOTE.

NO ***MOFFS***. NO ***CYBORGS***. NO ***FORCE WIELDERS***.

JUST A ***HANDFUL*** OF THE MILLIONS OF ***FORGETTABLE TOOLS*** OF THE EMPIRE.

BUT UNDER THE RIGHT CIRCUMSTANCES, NO ONE IN THE GALAXY IS MORE POWERFUL THAN A ***MINOR BUREAUCRAT*** IN THE ***RIGHT PLACE***.

AND IF THE GREAT ***LORD VADER*** CAN ***DEIGN*** TO JUST LOOK ***DOWN*** AND SAY...

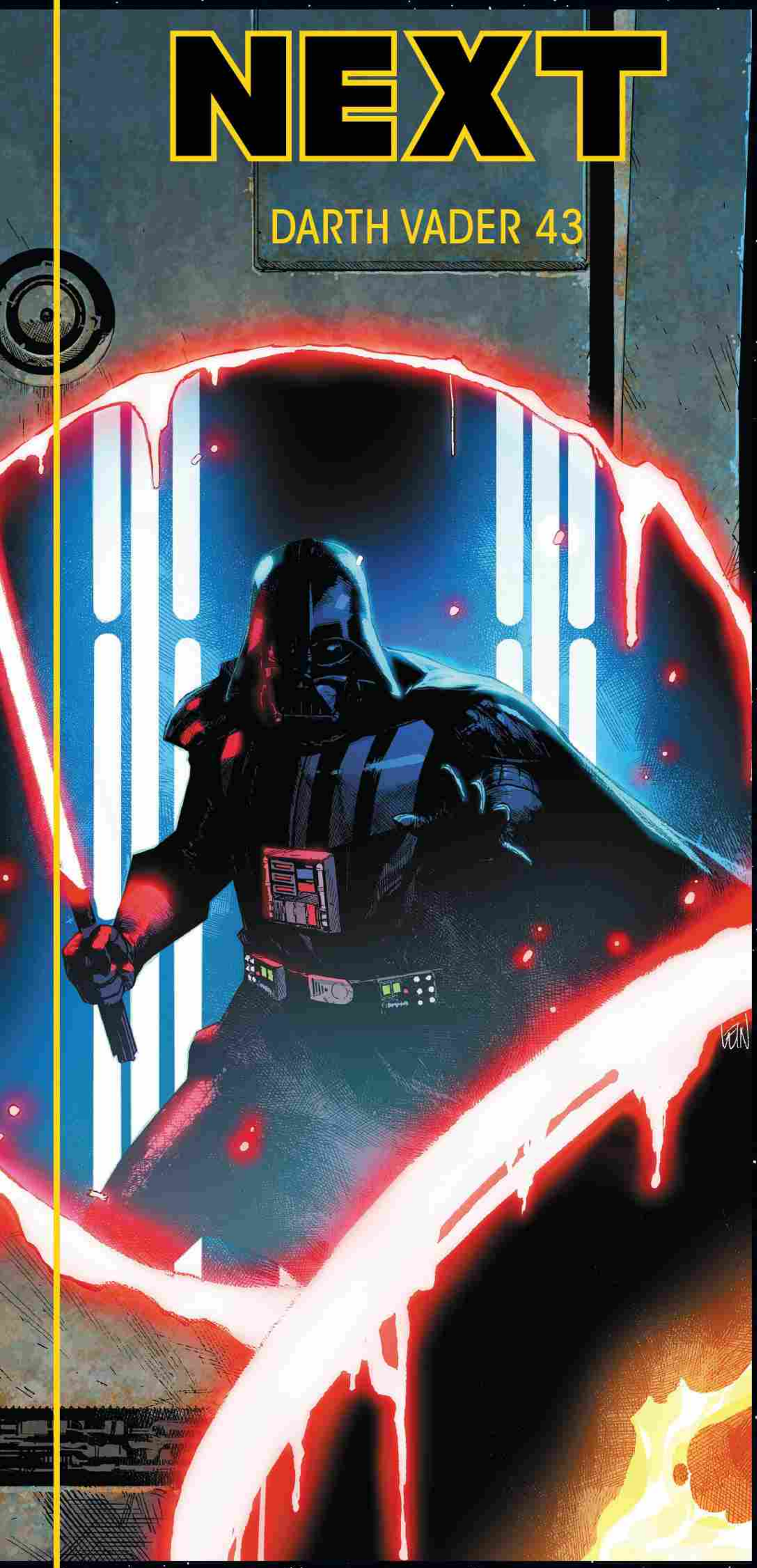
...YES...

...ALL THAT ***POWER*** CAN BE ***YOURS***.

To be continued....

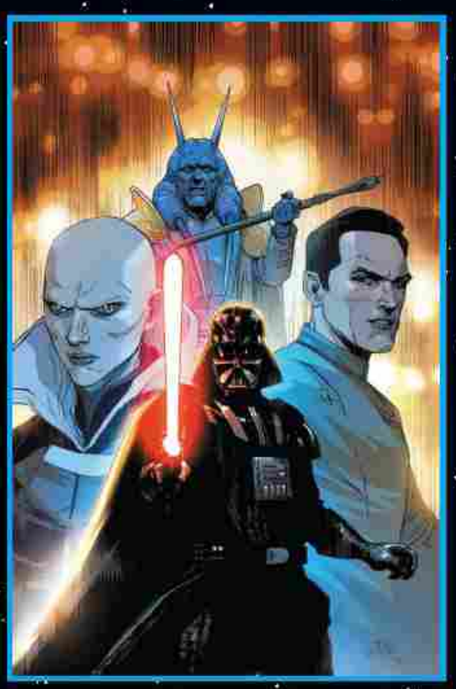
NEXT

DARTH VADER 43



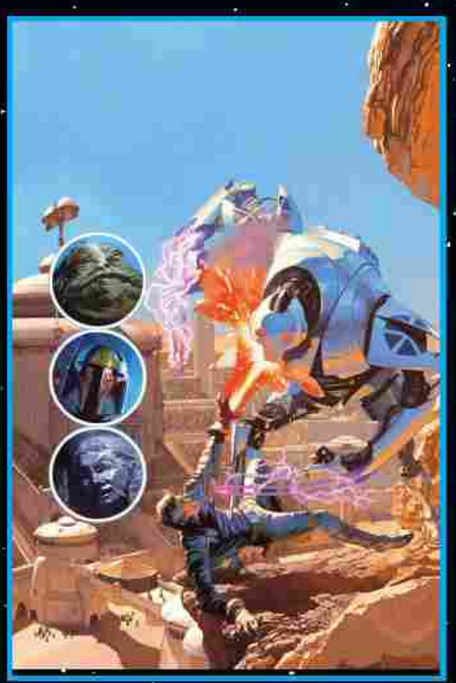
THE SAGA ALSO CONTINUES IN...

STAR WARS
42



STAR WARS
DARTH VADER 42

STAR WARS
THE MANDALORIAN
SEASON TWO 8



STAR WARS
BOUNTY
HUNTERS 42

STAR WARS
OBI-WAN KENOBI 4

STAR WARS
THRAWN:
ALLIANCES 1

STAR WARS
DOCTOR APHRA 40

STAR WARS and related text and illustrations are trademarks and/or copyrights, in the United States and other countries, of Lucasfilm Ltd. and/or its affiliates. © & TM Lucasfilm Ltd. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. Marvel and its logos are TM Marvel Characters, Inc. WWW.MARVEL.COM